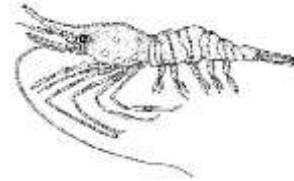


**ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES
NEWS RELEASE**



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**FISHERY ANNOUNCEMENT
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND COMMERCIAL SHRIMP POT FISHERY
SEASON CLOSURE
EMERGENCY ORDER 2-SF-E-05-12**

The Prince William Sound (PWS) commercial shrimp pot season will close effective 8:00 p.m. July 15. Fishery performance in harvest Area 3, which is comprised of waters in southwestern PWS, has been poor relative to fishing during the recent two years in harvest Areas 1 and 2. Since the season opened April 15 total harvest is low, approximately 19,100 lb from 104 landings by 32 vessels and fishery catch per unit of effort (CPUE) is 0.97 lb per pot (lb/pot). Logbook data indicate that fishing effort has been broadly distributed throughout the open area with CPUE remaining low in all areas with the exception of Copper Bay which closed by emergency order in response to declining CPUE.

The 2012 PWS shrimp pot season opened April 15, the third season following an 18-year closure, with a 51,240 lb guideline harvest level (GHL). Department survey data from stations located throughout PWS are used to estimate the spot shrimp total allowable harvest (TAH). Elements of the commercial harvest strategy allocate 40% of the TAH to commercial harvest and divide the western portion of PWS into three harvest areas with the seasons rotating annually between areas.

The 2012 CPUE is low compared with 2.50 lb/pot in harvest Area 1 during 2010 and 1.78 lb/pot in harvest Area 2 during 2011. The low fishery CPUE in harvest Area 3 is consistent with department data from the three survey sites in that area. However, the consistently low fishery CPUE in concert with the geographical extent of fishing effort strongly suggests that shrimp abundance throughout harvest Area 3 is low relative to Areas 1 and 2.

Although the estimated TAH is believed appropriate to the shrimp fisheries in the entire PWS

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area, additional commercial fishing in harvest Area 3 is unwarranted due to the low fishery catch and CPUE. Therefore, in order to sustainably manage the shrimp pot fishery in harvest Area 3, and to provide adequate notice for participants the commercial season will close effective 8:00 p.m. July 15. After the closure, shrimp pots may be stored on the grounds for no more than seven days and only if all bait and bait containers have been removed and all doors secured fully open (5AAC 31.052). Fishermen are reminded that all harvested shrimp must be landed within 72 hours following the season closure. **Participants and vessels used in the PWS commercial shrimp pot fishery may not participate in the PWS noncommercial shrimp pot fisheries during the 14 days following the season closure unless all requirements of 5AAC 31.053 are met.** This includes removing all commercial shrimp pots from the water and contacting the department in order to cancel their registration.

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